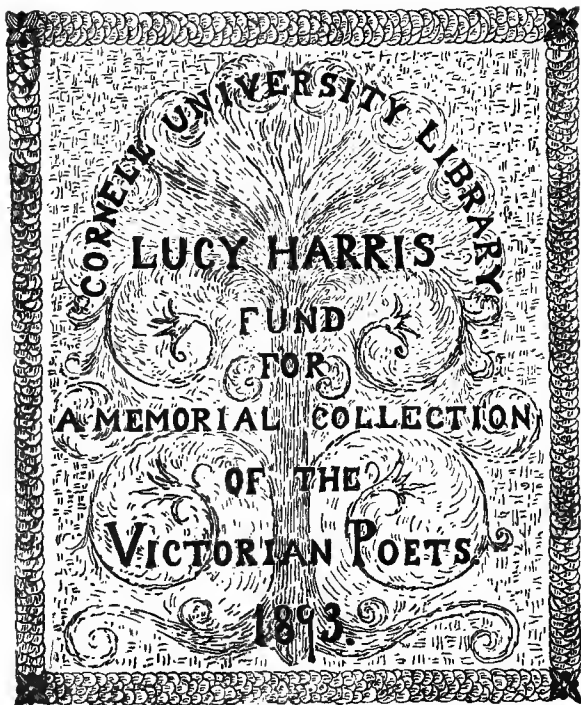


OUT OF THE DEPTHS

W. DUTTON BURRARD



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OUT OF THE DEPTHS



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OUT OF THE DEPTHS

POEMS

BY

W. DUTTON BURRARD

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & CO. L^D

PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD

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TO
MY FRIEND,
EDWARD TRAVERS DIXON.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE SUICIDE	I
IF ONLY ONE COULD TELL	10
POSSIBILITIES	12
BEREAVEMENT	13
THE EARTH-WORM	15
IN A CATHEDRAL	16
MATTER	23
YOU AND I	43
THE SUN	44
CHANGE	45
WAITING	47
SEPARATION	49
A THEISTIC HYMN	51
MADELEINE	53
PESSIMISM	55
TARES	56
LOVE	59
MAGNETISM	60
TO A LADY	62
THE FALL OF MAN	64
FRIENDSHIP	85

THE SUICIDE.

(27-2-91.)

I.

PUT it away—I cannot bear the sight
Of that dead purple face, with horrid stain,
That mark of infamy, that brand of Cain ;
Put it away—and may the coming night
Strike darkness on my brain !

Draw on the sheet—lock up the door—efface
So gruesome spectacle from sight of man ;
Let those look on, who wish to look, and can
But I have neither wish, nor strength to face
The seal of that trepan.

I lov'd him not in life ; I loathe him dead ;
I gaze in horror on that lifeless clay ;
Alas ! philosophy hath gone astray,
And left me trembling with a nameless dread,
Which nothing can allay.

I shrink from him, as from a thing accurst,
Who dared to raise his hand, and break the Rod
Of Life, vouchsafed to him in trust by God ;
Who dared to spurn the precious gift, and durst
Make of himself a clod.

And yet—who knows what agony of mind
He suffer'd, ere he took that final leap,
Beneath the plane of finite thought, where deep
Below the surface of this earthly rind,
He found Lethean sleep ?

Who knows—who dares to formulate a guess,
As how the growing torture of his brain
Increased, and grew, and ever grew again,
While fortitude grew ever less and less,
Before such maddening pain ?

Who knows ?—It's surely not for mortal mind
To mete out formal judgment, wholly based
On false analogies of self, encased
In narrow'd groove, where tortures of such kind
Had never to be faced.

No, no—as God be just, I plead no, no !
For his was not the usual coward case,
Where men lose heart and head before disgrace,
Where men slay manhood, rather than forego
A single woman's face.

No such material form of pain was there,
But rather torture exquisitely keen,
As subtly terrible, as can be seen
Upon this planet-world, or anywhere,
Or as has ever been.

The consciousness of some disordered blend,
Some occult lesion, hidden deep, or flaw
Incognizable as God's cosmic law,
Yet working surely to its psychic end,
And flooding him with awe.

Inherited maybe, or haply due
To some sporadic genesis of force,
Which, baffling science, yet in silent course
Insidiously moves on, and leaves no clue,
To mark its hidden source.

Advancing, snake-like, stealthily—as vain
To stay the moments, hurrying swiftly by—
Destroying mind, and prompting him to cry,
“Than mine, no brain is greater!” and again,
“How happy ’twere to die!”

Lies—vain lies!—evolved with crafty aim,
The tortured wretch still hoping for reprieve;
Delivered with intention to deceive;
The product of a mind, enwrapt in flame
From morning until eve.

So earnestly to be believed he sought,
His torture truly must have been intense;
For he retain’d an equipoise of sense,
Which sanely showed him, how each day was bought
At sanity’s expense.

And as the circling wavelets on a pond,
Disturb’d in its placidity, expand
And circle outward, till they reach the land,
So moved the subtle poison, till beyond
His power of command.

Till subterfuge went under, and pretence
No longer making effort to retain
A semblance of that studied front, the brain
At length awoke to overwhelming sense
Of vitriolic pain.

And then the end drew nigh ! By God and man
Forsaken, helpless, face to face with hell
On earth, outcast from all he loved so well—
A thing of speechless shame—by hideous ban,
He rais'd his hand, and fell !

And quicker than a flash from lightning-flame,
The spark of life went out, and lo !—the dew
Of death appear'd on brow, and rigid grew
The body, there—for all the world the same,
Yet infinitely new.

Oh ! mystery inscrutable ! Oh ! strange
Unfathomable problem, whence the light
Of consciousness, and how in hurried flight
It vanishes again beyond the range
Of philosophic light !

II.

PUT it away, I said, but I recall
In sorrow, the intolerant behest ;
Self-communing hath taught me, curs'd or blest,
'Tis not for human hand to lift the pall
Of his eternal rest.

Unlock the door—draw back the sheet—unveil
So sad a spectacle to sight of man.
Let those lay blame who wish to blame, and can,
But I have neither wish, nor heart to rail
At anything so wan.

Draw down the blind ; subdue the morning light ;
Tread reverently in presence of the dead ;
With flowers deftly decorate his bed,
And purple mark conceal with lilies white,
Arranged about his head.

Do honour to the corse ! What thoughts are mine,
As silently beside the bier I stand !
How weak and fragile seems that sinning hand,
Which launch'd a human soul across the line
Of mystic shadow-land !

What power infinite is this, which lies
Concealed within the seeming puny scope
Of human impotence ! What need to grope
'Midst earth-worms in the soil, when one might rise
To almost boundless hope !

Oh ! fool !—what power lies within thy grasp,
Of which to make vain boast ? A mere machine
Art thou, whose attributes of harm are seen
Throughout the living world. Did not an asp
Destroy a mighty queen ?

With them thou can'st destroy. But can'st thou make ?
Can'st thou, except in automatic way,
Likewise possess'd by them, produce one ray
Of consciousness ? Can'st thou, with all at stake,
Mould life from silent clay ?

Nay more, apart from life, can'st thou create
One single speck of dust? Can'st thou, on wings
Of science, add to earth's eternal springs
One drop? Can'st thou affect the aggregate
Of seething, vortex rings?

Oh! fool, prate not of power! To the Mind
Of God, what art thou? What, indeed, thy race,
So firmly rooted? Think of Time and Space,
Which are to Him no more than whispering wind
Across an infant's face.

What art thou? What, indeed? When Milky Way
In labour-agony, with central sun
Gestating in its awful womb, where none
Save God can see, is nought—where, day by day,
The myriad ages run!

Is nought—is nothing! Just a game of bowls,
Played on a bowling-green some summer night,
For pastime simple, or perchance delight
In calculating how the bias rolls
The ball from left to right!

And yet—in spite of all, one little ray
Of light illumines the darkness ; for I dare
To hear the still small voice of Soul declare,
That though to Him we are as flecks of spray,
God has us in His care !

IF ONLY ONE COULD TELL.

If only one could tell,
When call'd upon a line to take,
With Destiny, itself, at stake,
If only one could tell,
Then would it be well.

If only one could know,
When face to face with choice of path,
Rank weeds, or fruitful aftermath,
If only one could know,
What harvests would one mow !

If only one could see
The nature of that silken thread,
Which ultimately weighs like lead,
If only one could see,
Then would one be free.

If only one could hear
That still, small voice, which lies within,
Challenging the approach of sin,
If only one could hear,
To God would one be near !

POSSIBILITIES.

AND so the world wags on. We meet,
And know at once, that we could love,
Were opportunity at hand,
Were time and space at our command,
Know it surely as the dove
Is guided by her true mate's greet.

We feel it in our secret heart,
We see it in each other's eye,
By signs too subtle to dissect,
We realize, what we suspect,
And yet a tender, soft, good-bye
Is all we say—and then, we part.

Separate, and nought, not e'en
Remembrance lives, unless perchance
When gazing on the stars of heav'n ;
Think, if Fate had only giv'n
More propitious circumstance,
How different might our lives have been !

BEREAVEMENT.

SIGH, drooping spirit, sigh !
The sky o'erhead is lowering darkly,
And all to thee is black ;
But though thou sigh'st a thousand sighs,
Thou can'st not bring her back.

Sigh, sobbing spirit, sigh !
For 'cross thy life is cast a cloud,
Resembling some funereal shroud,
That hides from thee the morning-light
And makes the day appear as night,
Grim and fearful to the eye.

Weep, weary spirit, weep !
Pour out thine heart-felt lamentation,
Pray to God, thy woes to steep
In gentle, loving, death-like sleep,
To ease thee in thy tribulation ;
For rest from thee hath gone,
And thou art all alone
Amidst the turmoil of creation.

Moan, mournful spirit, moan !
Thou can'st not breathe the heavy air,
All speech is stifled by despair,
 Since thou art all alone.
Raise to God thy streaming eyes,
 Gasp out thine awful agony,
 Pour forth thy speechless misery
In dumb-mute moans and sighs.
Bow down thy head before His Face,
Prostrate thyself and plead for grace.
Lift up thy grief towards the Throne,
 For she hath gone from thee for ever,
 Across the spectral boundary-river,
 And left thee all alone !

THE EARTH-WORM.

Love, through languid hours of ease,
Held me chain'd, on bended knees.

Cloy'd to madness, I withdrew,
And to Knowledge turned my view.

Beaten backward, helpless, blind,
Duty occupied my mind.

Then, at length, from off the ground
I rais'd my eyes, and solace found.

IN A CATHEDRAL.

I.

SWELL-ORGAN music swept the aisle,
Within the grey cathedral pile,
And there I tarried for a while.

After contact with the street,
The rumbling traffic, tramp of feet,
Such strains to me seem'd passing sweet.

With hidden face, on bended knee,
I sank into a reverie,
My soul at peace, my spirit free.

I heeded not the throng around,
Bowing in reverence to the ground,
I only heard the music's sound.

And what it spake, I do not try
To paint in words, since human eye
Cannot conceive of things on high ;

Since human speech, and human hand
Are circumscribed by finite band,
The limit we may understand.

II.

Art, the servitor of sense,
Cannot presume to excellence,
Beyond her master's competence.

All art, for ever thus applied,
Hath degraded and decried
The holy thing it glorified.

Daring to paint in red and green,
On canvas coarse, conception mean,
The greatest mysteries unseen.

Daring to hew from earthly stone—
Oh ! blind conceit—can aught condone ?—
The Figure of the Great Unknown.

Daring in tawdry speech to say,
What follows on that awful day
When body turns again to clay.

Narrowing to finite span
Things that were, ere worlds began,
Thus degrading God to man.

III.

In ecstasy, there is access
To subtler forms of consciousness,
Than we concretely can express.

Such emotion may be found
In the whirlwind's solemn sound,
Thundering mightily around.

Or, perchance, on topmost peak
Of mountain high, when rosy streak
Foretells the dawn about to break.

Or in grand, orchestral strain,
Where may be discern'd a vein
Of higher thought, than words obtain.

In such moments, undefined
And vague impressions subtly find
An ingress into mortal mind—

Impressions inarticulate
At best, yet to the normal state
Concept-power, passing great.

IV.

In one long quivering note on high,
The strains, sunk under, whisp'ring, die ;
So, I think, the angels sigh.

Sweet meditation, snapt in twain
Thus rudely, 'tis with fuller pain
To mortal things I turn again—

To mortal things, to mortal tongue,
Threats from out the pulpit flung,
Of hellish torture for the young.

The old, and those of every age,
For all—for nothing can assuage
The inextinguishable rage,

Of him they have created God,
Who ruleth with an iron rod,
Who takes delight in human blood ;

Who pays no heed to human cries,
Who pants for human sacrifice,
And pardons only, when Christ dies.

V.

Lord, for how long shall it be
Thy beneficent decree,
That man should thus consider Thee !

Hath not the human race progress'd .
Yet far enough, with a bequest
Of further Reason, to be blest ?

Hath not the mind of man evolved,
So that now may e'en be solved
The mysteries in Thee involved ?

At least a further gift of light,
Disclosing to our purblind sight,
Thy Love's illimitable height ?

At least one single spark of grace,
To raise upright the coward race,
Who dare not look Thee in the Face.

Who dare not e'en—let it be said—
Approach Thy Throne, so sore afraid,
Without a Mediator's aid?

VI.

I see a stately mansion rise,
By aid of pinewood, derrick, guys,
Stretching to the very skies.

Erected, and fast ran the sands
Of myriad years, by helping hands
From thrice ten thousand distant lands.

And written on a mystic scroll,
*"I am the Pure and Perfect Soul,
Theistic, Undivided, Whole."*

And the scaffoldings of Christ,
Mahomet, Buddha, Eucharist,
Fade away into the mist.

Their work complete, their function done ;
And every nation 'neath the Throne,
Gives glory to Thy Name alone.

For in that edifice erect,
Every creed and every sect,
Meet and worship Thee direct.

M A T T E R.

(TO G. O. S. P.)

How strange it should be so !
 I know not e'en thy Christian name, and yet,
 Among those entities—alas ! so few—
 Which make to me the aggregate of life,
 Thou hold'st a place, an honoured place, unique ; 5
 No corner-stone, 'tis true, on which be based
 The sum of my well-being—rather say,
 Some cunningly constructed co-support,
 Let in the built-up edifice, whereby
 To hold aloft, and skilfully sustain 10
 The crown of Mind.

Chance threw me in thy way,
 A sudden call of duty—nothing more—
 A few short hours' sojourn on that cliff,
 Uprising purely white from out the waves,

The bulwark of a mighty nation's pride ;
Whence England took her grand historic name,
At once the execration of her foes,
Discerning therein symbolised a strength,
Beyond their artificial armaments,
And so vindictive—and to us, so dear.
Ay, chance I call it, for no better name
Presents itself to that dull, glimmering light
I designate with rare grandiloquence,
My Knowledge. Chance !—as though the hidden Force,
Directing myriad worlds throughout that space,
Which is to us eternal, could not bend
To turn attention to the trivial needs
Of poor Humanity !

15

25

'Twas like unto
The junction of two elements, akin,
Our meeting—Wahlverwandschaft call'd by him,
Whose towering intellect bequeath'd to man
A clearer insight into human ways,
And, legacy divine, a wider sense
Of things beyond the Knowledge Absolute
Of mortal mind.

30

35

Throughout that snow-clad night,

We sat and talk'd around the homely fire,
Without one pause, or wish on either side,
To break the chain of sympathetic speech,
Which held us bound ; all thought of natural sleep
Thrust out by that far-reaching, subtle sense, 40
Affinity of mind—which gives to those,
Whom destiny, through mental turn, hath mark'd
To tread in solitude the path of life,
No kindred soul at hand, more true repose,
More deeply subtle consciousness of rest, 45
Than can the god-maid, Slumber, e'en defied,
In kindest mood, with witchery and wile
Achieve. And when the first cold rays of dawn
Broke from the east across the wintry sky,
Disclosing dimly to the gaze the land, 50
All white with frosted snow, and down beyond
A waste of waters, desolate as death,
There were we still engag'd in colloquy,
More earnest, sympathetic, more at one,
Than e'en had been at first, eight hours before. 55
And then—the tell-tale minute-hand in view,
Killing the precious moments, one by one,
Relentlessly exact, and caring nought

For mortal circumstance—the time had come,
So soon, for me to go. But in that night, 60
Those silent hours, when our world, asleep,
Forgot its sorrows, and in tranquil dreams
Lived o'er again the multifarious joys,
Which are the lot of all, we forg'd a chain
Of such good part, as only death can break ; 65
A golden chain of purest sympathy,
Where mind to mind, electively akin,
Goes forth to find a living complement,
Wherewith to make itself, if not complete,
—Which only love can do—at least so strong, 70
That not e'en separation, such as ours,
With twice three thousand leagues of brine between,
—And what test more severe !—can tear apart
The links, that bind.

I oft lay down my book,
And, lost in musing reverie, recall 75
That bygone scene ; repicturing thy face,
Illumin'd with an intellectual light,
That ever shone more clear, as argument,
The fruits of wide research, and deeper thought,
Cemented with conviction's seal, broke forth 80

In round sonorous tones—as rugged strong
A cast of countenance, as is—and yet,
So passing sad. Methinks, 'tis ever thus
With those, by destiny impell'd, who dare
To scale the very topmost crags expos'd 85
To our defective sight ; indifferent
To all things on a lower plane of thought,
Where winds in placid course the stream of life ;
Yet conscious to a most acute degree
Of that deep-rooted, peace-destroying pain, 90
Which isolation brings.

'Tis difficult,
I find, despite much anxious communing,
To estimate the prudence of that course,
On which, with so much zeal, thou hast embark'd.
The enterprise is one, so perilous, 95
So awful in its hideous consequence,
So fraught with evil-omen, that the path,
Which leadeth to accomplishment, is white
With dead-men's bones, sole evidence of those,
Who have preceded thee, and fail'd : for though 100
To thee, fresh caught within the toils, the quest
Comes in the light of some new-born conceit,

The offspring of subjective reverie,
In very truth it has, since world began,
Or leastways, since the race first rose to speech, 105
Absorb'd the highest faculties of mind.

'Tis like unto a goodly youth, who, born
With instincts subtle and a soaring mind,
Denied to those poor tillers of the soil,
Whom Fate had destined for his intercourse, 110
At length grows weary of such commonplace,
And sallies forth, equipped from head to foot,
With morion of intellect, and coat
Of mail, each link of which a verity
Of Knowledge Positive—his mind intent 115
On finding for himself some resting-place,
Whereon to found a homestead, more attun'd
To his exalted sympathies. And, lo,
In course of time, his heart aglow with hope,
And every pulse a-tingling with the sense 120
Of unaccustom'd enterprise, he leaves
The plains beneath, without one glance bestow'd,
And quickly pressing on, by zig-zag path,
And route precipitous, he disappears

Within the melancholy fastnesses 125
Which mark that unknown land. And yet to him
There is no fear. The novelty alone
Sufficient is to lend a lenient view
To his environment ; combin'd with which
Is zeal unquenchable, a living fire, 130
Monopolising heart, and mind, and soul,
And flooding him with incontestable
Virility.

And so he travels on,
Rejoicing rather in the toilsome way,
And even courting obstacles ; the which, 135
If small, at once surmounting ; and if great,
Not satisfied, until he'd found the means,
By which to overcome.

Thus many months,
Extending e'en to years, when comes a day,
When face to face with narrow defile-pass, 140
He halts and looks around ; and what he sees,
Recalls to him a fact, long since forgot ;
That mortal body, cast in finite mould,
A slave must be to mortal attribute,
No matter what the expedients employ'd, 145

Whereby to relegate the coil, and rise
Pre-eminent. For into that stout heart,
Whose well-timed beat, unerringly exact,
Hath never swerv'd the fraction of a hair
Throughout untold vicissitudes, there steals
The first faint glimmer of a timorous quake,
The consciousness of fear.

150

So firmly fixed
Had been his vigilance upon the ground,
Wherefrom he'd tried to disengage a clue,
To lead him on, instead of from above,
Where clearly rose the snow-capt mountain peaks,
Discernible from far, and hence a guide,
He had not noted, how a gradual change,
Had compass'd him about. And now, behold,
He finds the towering heights, on either side,
Have narrow'd, imperceptibly, so close,
That where before there stretched a gracious width,
Now nothing but a defile stands, and that
Converging still. With which he looks behind,
And for a moment entertains the thought
Of turning backward to retrace his steps,
And mark where he went wrong; when comes, at once,

155

160

165

Conviction, strong as certainty, that he
No fault hath made, nor could have made,
Since every step advanced had been the fruit 170
Of flawless argument, each link deduced
From that preceding, and the chain complete.
And then as climax to such questioning,
But idle, since inevitable the end,
Upon his slowly waking sense there dawns 175
A staggering fact, to wit, that e'en so willed
—The obstacles, he'd travers'd on his way
With so much ease, assuming now a front
So sternly difficult that all attempt
To scale the scarpe most certainly must fail— 180
The retrogressive steps had pass'd beyond
The power of his competence. And so,
Dissembling his dismay, as best he can,
Not e'en admitting it within himself,
He plunges, with a well-affected zeal, 185
Into the dark recesses of the pass,
And, going, thus self-communes, gaining strength.

“The heart of man is like unto a bird,
That takes to roost at every passing cloud,

Deeming the sun hath set. The Brain, alone, 190
 The toiler after Knowledge Positive,
 Retains its equipoise, and scouts to scorn
 Illusions of the eye ; equipped with that,
 Which nothing can gainsay, Eternal Truth ;
 Acquired, and pieced together, link by link, 195
 Without a flaw, synthetically sound,
 And prov'd ten thousand times within the fire
 Of overwhelming evidence. Though dark
 This moment to the view, and hemm'd all round,
 Save for this narrow egress, passing on 200
 Apparently to gloom the more intense,
 No cause there be for fear, since Brain assures
 By logic, incontestably exact,
 'Tis but a passing cloud—Light lies beyond."

But soon he finds, that if such be the case, 205
 —And heresy unspeakable to doubt
 A predication of the Hallow'd Brain—
 'Tis well to practise scientific mode,
 And recognise in reason, that a term,
 Elastically vague as is *beyond*, 210
 Need not as natural consequence imply

The light predicted, to be close at hand ;
For clearly, without qualifying term,
The word *beyond* indefinite becomes,
Synonymous with *yonder*, which may mean 215
But fifty feet, or even fifty mile,
And so, absurd to take in finite sense.
Therefore——

But why pursue such sophistries,
With which he, self-deceiving, makes attempt
To pacify the undissembling pulse ! 220
For fear is on him now, and nought can bring
Conviction to the contrary. Such gloom
As now confronts him, so intensely deep,
That straining eye can barely just discern
The waters dripping from the cavern walls, 225
And coating all the roadway green with slime,
A peril to the heedless, lies beyond
The confines of his cognizance. And yet,
In little time, he plunges into gloom,
So terrible, that that, which went before, 230
Was as the day.

For now, 'tis black as night,
Conjoin'd to which, the passage, narrowing still,
C

Becomes, in time, so small, that he is fain
To grope his toilsome way on hands and feet,
Crawling along like some dumb animal, 235
In search of shelter, wounded unto death,
Yet finding none. And so he labours on,
Till e'en he fears the Citadel of Mind,
The Brain itself, on which his all depends,
Must fail before such horror, as is his ; 240
For ghostly voices strike upon his ear,
Crying in wailing tone—"Go back ! Go back !"
—Hallucinations of a surety,
Fell sign of failing nerve. And then, with hope
Well-nigh extinct, with brain on fire, and strength 245
No longer capable of making stand,
He spies ahead a little glimmering light
—And never beacon shone more welcomely—
A faint, dull speck of misty grey—no more—
Such as steals in at the frosted window-pane 250
On bleakest winter's dawn—and yet to him,
No gladder sight could be.—"It is," he says,
"The promised light beyond !"

As thing bereft,
He madly scrambles on, regarding nought

Save that, afore—the jagged stones ignor'd, 255
The slime contemn'd—and every step he takes
Brings it to joyful view, more full and clear,
Until at length a shaft of yellow light
Breaks straight with blinding force upon his gaze ;
Yet not before it hath disclos'd to him 260
The end of his long, torturing sepulture,
And day beyond.

So great the sudden glare,
His eyes, accusom'd to the ebon shades,
See rather less, than that they did before ;
But eyesight is not needed, for the path, 265
He knows, leads straight beyond, where hope, and life,
And e'en the object of his quest reside.
One struggle more, and he hath reached the goal.
The cool breeze breaketh on his brow. With sense
Of peace ineffable, he sinketh down, 270
Grateful that of the Universal Force
—Grateful to whom, to what, he doth not know,
Nor even marks the full absurdity
Of feeling gratitude towards a thing,
Unknown, yet known to be inanimate— 275
So grand a part-resultant should be found
Of matter-entity within his brain.

And so he lieth, till, his eyes at ease,
His eyelids languid ope, and then—*Ah! God!*
—How strange at such a time, that Name forgot 280
Should rise unbidden to the palsied lips!—
He springeth to his feet with hideous cry.
Upon a narrow ledge of rock, he stands,
As in mid-air, with precipice below,
And towering perpendicularly up 285
A scarp behind. The entrance to the pass
Hath gone. No other egress is at hand.
Annihilation fronts him, face to face.
Alone in that dread attitude expos'd,
Beyond all hope of mortal help, and God 290
A thing of nought; with no alternative,
Rejecting violent means, save lingering death,
Unspeakably more awful to endure;
Blanch'd to the lips, he calls upon the Brain,
His sole ally, in frenzied tone, for aid, 295
Foreknowing that upon its stamina,
—And never leant man on more broken reed—
Depends his all.—And what makes it reply?

My friend, from sad experience I speak,
And thus in allegorical disguise 300

Minutely trace the path of that poor soul,
Whose mental predilection—thing unsought,
Inherent, uncontrollable, as much
Intrinsic portion of his entity,
As hand or eye—inclines in natural course 305
To Matter, as the source of things unknown.
I, too, have stood upon that narrow ledge,
Peering, with horror-stricken countenance,
Into that awful *Nothingness* below ;
Heard the loud laugh maniacal, and mark'd 310
How e'en the living shadows of the place
Seemed steep'd in apathy, too dull to move.
I, too, have raised despairing cry for aid,
Turned to the hallow'd brain, my one support,
Looking thereto for help in direst need, 315
Ne'er doubting the result, so strong my trust,
So firm my faith—so trebly blind my sight !

For there, it fail'd me, helplessly succumb'd,
Went under—swift as shot beneath the waves,
Dragging by its own weight to unknown depths 320
The rigid corpse, attach'd—its boasted strength
A thing of rags, and I—a thing of woe.

Of woe, indeed ! For nought was left to me
 Of life, save death—either the end to make
 By act precipitate, or linger on,
 Existing still in that I breath'd, but lost
 To every hope and sense that make the sum
 Of earthly happiness.

325

'Twas then, that I,
 In that dread need, by hidden force impell'd,
 Gaz'd upwards, and discern'd the Helping Hand,
 Outstretched towards me pitiful and kind,
 And heard a Voice.

330

“ *Confound not things apart !
 Severalize the Giver from the Gift !
 The Light of Reason have I thee bequeath'd,
 For use, and not abuse. As given thee,
 So can it be withdrawn, if found to fail
 Thy stewardship. Look up, and comprehend
 How infinite the interspace between
 The Fount of All Things, and that glimmering spark,
 Thou callest Mind ; and I will show to thee
 A path, whereby the promised Light beyond
 May be attain'd in fuller radiancy,
 Than thou hast e'en the power to conceive ;*

335

340

*With Reason, satisfied to fullest sense,
My faithful servitor, as was to be,
And not perverted to mine enemy."*

345

In reverence ineffable, I gaz'd.
The scales fell from my eyes. I took the Hand
And mounted, how I know not, swift as thought,
To empyrean heights ; beyond the scope
Of that poor, arrogant philosophy,
Which, boasting all things, treacherously fail'd,
And left me helpless, stranded on the brink
Of that dread precipice.

350

My friend, methinks,

In such sore need, on all must be bestow'd
A like apportionment of grace ; for Love
Can have no bounds, if Infinite, nor make
Distinctive difference—unless constrain'd
By Wisdom, also Infinite, whose view,
Eternity transcending, is to us
Inscrutable. And yet how few take heed !
Maybe, they do not see, maybe they scorn
The proffer of that Helping Hand, Divine,
Or steadfast to the last in their sad faith

355

360

Deem it the outcome of a weaken'd brain, 365
A mere subjective figment, thing of nought.
Be how it may, the issue is assur'd,
That most go over ; some to sudden death ;
And happy they, compared with those, who live
Like vegetables without aim or sense, 370
Existing only in the consciousness,
That so-called life is really death in life,
Intolerable for a moment's span,
Did not their only channel of escape
Mean death—annihilation absolute— 375
Where e'en that mournful spark, they now possess
Goes under.

Few there are, 'tis true, so strong,
So self-reliant, vertebrate, serene,
So unaffected by the giddy height,
That they experience no sense of fear, 380
But calmly take a survey of the rock,
And note, with practised eye, if possible
To make descent ; and if discern'd, with ease,
Without precipitation, and with care,
Noting the several footsteps, one by one, 385
And ne'er progressing on, until assur'd

The foothold in advance, they nimbly climb
 The scarpéd face ; and striking at length a path,
 Move on to peaceful groves ; where solemn shades,
 Deep-bower'd springs, and restful solitudes 390
 Invite a corresponding frame of mind.

'Tis there, my friend, I venture to opine,
 'Midst that proud, autocratic Court of Mind,
 Where highest philosophic thought holds sway,
 Uninfluenced by passion, caring nought 395
 For sentimental promptings of the heart,
 For yearnings, half express'd, yet undefin'd,
 For cravings, such as move the multitude
 To cast off self-reliance, and to turn
 To That they feel instinctively exists, 400
 Believe with fullest strength of faculty,
 Yet dare not state they *know*—'tis there, my friend,
 Wilt thou, retiring from the strife, repose.
 To thee I've shown, where Spirit may be found,
 Consistently with Reason, unimpair'd ; 405
 And though it hath thy luke-warm sympathy,
 Thy mental attitude doth not permit,
 That thou should'st give it reverent assent.

So let it be ! I am content to know,
That thy sole aim is striving after Truth ! 410
But could I once but think, that thine attempt
Might ultimately bring thee to the state
Of those poor things who writhe below the brink,
Hating to live, and yet afraid to die,
I'd stifle Reason, God's most precious gift, 415
And, prostrate on the ground, would supplicate
—As though the purest utterance of man
Could move the fix'd, undeviating course
Of His Design—that He might show me grace,
And strike thee dead ! 420

YOU AND I.

LIKE the mountain-mist arising,
From the vales below,
Wrapping all the world in cloud-land,
Coverlet of woe,
Fell across our lives a blight,
Changing sunshine into night,
Making wrong appear as right ;
—And we would not see the light,
You and I !

'Twas but a slight misunderstanding,
Easy to disperse,
Had we not taken up a bearing,
Foolishly perverse.
Oh ! why can never hearts refrain,
From causing those, they love, the pain
Of thinking, that they love in vain ?
—By doing so, what did we gain,
You and I ?

THE SUN.

WHEN all aglare with dancing light,
The world becomes a thing of pain,
So exquisite, that throbbing brain
No longer can sustain the fight,
Then, oh ! then, I hate thee, Sun !

In latitudes, where cooler breeze
Breaks on the brow, across the path,
Bestrewn with snow, and on the hearth
The crackling yule-logs snort and sneeze,
Then, oh ! then, I love thee, Sun !

And yet thou know'st no change above ;
'Tis I, the earth-worm, here, who see
A break in thine eternity ;
Great Source of Life, or hate, or love,
With awe, I ever view thee, Sun !

CHANGE.

Look where one may,
Around one, 'neath the northern skies,
Where man, pre-eminent, holds sway,
Or scan the lonely islets of the southern range,
The same applies,
At all times, and in every place, unceasing change.

The old give way,
And new formations take their place,
Only themselves to live a day,
And then to follow in the footsteps, gone before ;
And so, the race
Floats onward, ever onward, to the unknown shore.

As spring arrives,
The buds burst open on the trees,
And leaves commence their tender lives,
Evolving to maturity, through summer's heat ;
But autumn's breeze
Blows cold, and casts them down beneath the passing feet.

But yesterday,
Possess'd of human attribute,
And lo ! a pallid corpse, to-day ;
With living consciousness from hallow'd brain outcast,
And lying mute,
The tongue, that spake the garner'd wisdom of the past.

So shall it be,
With both of us, ere long, my friend ;
Obedient to the stern decree,
Contributory atoms to the general state,
Shall we both lend,
With no security, beyond our trust in Fate !

WAITING.

ONCE we were children, happy and gay ;
 Now we are old, with heads turning grey ;
 And still we are waiting,
 Wearily waiting !
 Waiting for what ?—Ah ! no one can say !

Day succeeds night, and night follows day,
 Quickly the moments are passing away ;
 And still we are waiting,
 Wearily waiting !
 Waiting for what ?—Ah ! no one can say !

Long have we combated 'midst the wild fray,
 Scorning the present—yet hoping alway ;
 And still we are waiting,
 Wearily waiting !
 Waiting for what ?—Ah ! no one can say !

Years only lengthen the bitter array
Of sorrow, and sadness, and sick'ning delay ;
And still we are waiting,
Wearily waiting !
What are we waiting for?—Can no one say ?

SEPARATION.

CLASH out, ye bells, from every steeple high,
Let all the living earth resound with song,
From every quarter raise the joyous cry,
Re-echoing around to meet the sky,

And ever growing strong !

For heart and mind in sympathy are wed,
And all the world to me is rosy red,

Since I have found a true, true friend,

And Love will reign, and have no end

Till one of us be dead !

Toll out, ye bells, from every steeple high,
Let all the living earth dissolve in tears,
From every quarter, raise the piteous cry,
Re-echoing around to meet the sky,

And growing wide with years !

For sympathy from heart and mind hath fled,
And over all the world a pall is spread,

Since I have lost a true, true friend,

Though Love will reign and have no end,

Till both of us be dead !

Be silent, bells, in every steeple high,
Let all the living earth sink down in peace,
Let every quarter hold from making cry,
Disturbing to the azure-vaulted sky,

Let every whisper cease !

For heart and mind on memories are fed,
And all the world to me is tinged with red,
Since I possess a true, true friend,
And Love will reign, and have no end,
E'en both of us be dead !

A THEISTIC HYMN.

OH ! God, my Father, Holy One,
For recompense I do not sue ;
I love Thee for Thyself alone,
I love Thee true.

For me, there is no fear in death,
My trust in Thee demands no test ;
I know that with my last-drawn breath
I shall find rest.

What that may be, I cannot guess,
I do not even know its kind,
For in Thy Wisdom, I possess
A finite mind.

Surrounded by uncertain light,
I dare not e'en attempt surmise,
Concerning what is hid from sight
Of human eyes.

Since this is so, by Thy Decree,
'Twere idle for me to despond,
For 'tis Thy Will I should not see,
What lies beyond.

And so 'tis foolish to opine,
To dogmatise, to strive to see ;
To such weak hearts, a love like mine
Can never be.

For it allows no room for doubt,
Nor egotistical refrains ;
All sordid feelings are thrust out,
And love remains.

Which is itself its own reward,
A recompense beyond compare.
If I may always love Thee, Lord,
I have no care.

My future is at Thy Command,
As is my present, so my past.
Oh ! let me feel Thy Helping Hand
Until the last !

MADELEINE.

OH ! sweet, my Madeleine,
Magnificently fair,
There lies a golden vein
Of sunshine in thine hair,
Sparkling in the summer light
Like some tangled skein
Of fairy-woven silken thread,
Clinging softly to thine head,
Ever shining clear and bright,
Saucy Madeleine !

Art thou never seized with sadness,
Laughing fairy-sprite ?
Doth thine heart's o'erflowing gladness
Linger through the night ?
Or falls on thee a sudden blight
With daylight on the wane,
Dispersing all thy fun in flight,
And making thee a common wight,
Shapely Madeleine !

Dost thou never feel despair
Heart-breaking in intensity ?
Is everything to thee so fair,
Amidst the wide immensity
Of ever changing human life
Through which thy footsteps tread,
Apparently without a thought
Of sadness in thy head ?
Oh ! Madeleine ! my Madeleine !
My little, child-like Madeleine !
I hear a voice within me cry,
All those that live, must surely die,
And with them thee, my Madeleine !
How wonder, when I gaze on thee,—
Incurring rightly at thine hands
The softest of all reprimands—
My thoughts in cloudland seem to be !

PESSIMISM.

OF what avail is fame, renown,
The searching after high degree,
Or health, or wealth, or smile, or frown?
In fifty years, where shall we be?

Beneath the sod, the food of worms,
In place of eyes, two gaping rings,
Exuding from our flesh the germs
Of other evanescent things!

Ah! where's the use? Of what avail
Is this ne'er-ending pantomime,
Where all perform, yet all bewail
The pointless bathos of the rhyme?

TARES.

OH ! thoughtless boy, a time will be
When thou wilt rue thy heedless course,
When thou, a prey to heart's remorse,
Wilt know of pain a like degree,
As she now knows, who worships thee.

Thou thinkest it a hateful wrong,
With consciousness of virile down,
To be attach'd to woman's gown.
A day will come, when thou wilt long
To feel again that tender thong,

To hear again that gentle tone,
Rais'd in reproof, so sadly sweet,
With tear-stained eye, and quivering beat
Of heart, all loving, yet alone,
Resolving slowly into stone.

Thy doing—only thine ! And she,
The one, who'd gladly suffer pain
To give to thee new life again,
Whose only fault, if fault it be,
Hath been to waste such love on thee.

Who, since thy birth, hath had no care,
For aught, decentred from thy good,
Who—speak it softly !—hath in food
Denied herself, her aim to spare,
So as to give thee fuller share.

Can human pathos deeper go
Than this ? And yet, to thee 'tis nought,
So blinded thou to every thought,
Beyond the narrow, selfish flow
Of thine own pleasure—her own woe !

Ay, truly, 'tis a glorious thing,
To know thyself a man, to feel
The self-reliant current steal
Throughout the flesh, and upward spring,
Changing the peasant to a king.

But kings may fall, and kings may reign !
Of manly spirit, 'tis no part,
To break, e'en thoughtlessly, the heart
Of her, who gave thee life in pain.
Such is the true-born coward's stain !

Awake ! the precious moments fly,
But still, there's time, when true regret
May help thee partly to forget.
The day is surely drawing nigh,
When thou wilt vainly call on high,

When pain, than hers, will e'en be worse.
Repentance taken at the flood
Can solace bring ; but tears of blood
Will ne'er awake the sleeping corse,
Nor give relief to life's remorse !

LOVE.

I KNOW no joy so great as love return'd,
 The subtle sympathy of souls akin,
 With speech superfluous, so strong the sense,
 That concord dwells within.

I know no pain so keen, as passion spurn'd,
 The maddening torment of a brain on fire,
 With reason prostrate, and the hallow'd brain
 A prey to sick desire.

And yet—though seeming real—both joy and pain,
 Are mere subjective figments of a mind,
 Wherein imagination holds such sway,
 That sense to truth is blind.

MAGNETISM.

How sweet was life ! How calm the elliptic course,
Where e'en the sorrows were but covert joys,
Till thou, disturbing comet, brought thy force,
To shake my equipoise !

Till thou, unheralded, from depths of space
Bore down with mighty rush, a thing of pain,
Convulsing nature with that wondrous face,
And vanishing again.

Unmindful of a consequence, so dire—
That where stability and peace did dwell,
Now plung'd a writhing body 'neath the fire
Of thine electric spell.

Oh ! Time, I look to thee to dry these tears !
'Tis thou, alone, can'st stifle this regret !
Roll on slow months, extending quick to years,
And teach me to forget !

Oh ! better 'twere, that I had never known thee,
 Than to suffer thus !
Oh ! better 'twere that thou had'st never shown me,
 What love were to us !
 Since thou cam'st only to deceive me,
 Steal my heart, and then to leave me !

TO A LADY.

SWEET youth, allied to every vice,
 'Tis pitiable to see !
Go, robe thyself for sacrifice !
 My bosom bleeds for thee.

The time is past for wild regret,
 'Tis futile now to sigh,
Thy life's fair sun is almost set,
 Thy day of doom is nigh.

For long, I've urged thee to comply
 With my heart-sore behest ;
And thou hast wept, and made reply
 That all was for the best.

That all around thee used thee ill,
 Was vain for thee to say.
Would not a little strength of will
 Have gain'd for thee the day ?

Dost thou not see, that by this vow,
Which binds thee to his name,
The martyr-crown which bless'd thy brow
Will be replaced by *shame* ?

All pitied thee thy lot before,
And pity thou did'st need ;
But henceforth none can pity more,
For *thou* hast done the deed.

Arise, and humbly meet thy fate,
Which nought can e'er refine ;
Embrace the heartless reprobate,
Whose life is henceforth thine !

Ah ! plain I see the coffin's nail
Within the bridal wreath ;
To me, there is no wedding-veil,
It is the shroud of death !

THE FALL OF MAN.

I.

TIME was, in those dark ages, when the earth
First, phoenix-like, took wings from off the pyre,
Where smoulder'd Pagan Rome—a wondrous birth,
To which we owe that ever-glowing fire,
That brought us out the pit, and still leads higher—
Time was, when all men gloried to believe
That old-world legend of the Fall of Eve.

Not allegorical disguise, but fact
' Was then accredited to that sweet tale ;
No fable there, but the whole written act
Was verbally correct, which to assail
No man conceiv'd, who lived within the pale ;
The tempting serpent, with the human tongue,
The Tree of Knowledge, where the Apple hung.

The yielding Mother by the snake advised ;
The no less erring Father, who gave in,
Without one word protesting, and devised,
In that dread moment, to all kith and kin,
The long, unbroken heritage of sin ;
The sudden consciousness of shame, the fear,
When holy footsteps broke upon their ear.

The Voice, that spake that most satanic curse,
Embracing one and all that cross'd the sight,
The snake, the woman, and the man, and worse,
The very ground, but now emerging bright
From the chaotic darkness of the night ;
The woman, to a multiple of pain ;
The man, to toil for ever without gain.

Eternal curse, through ages yet unknown,
Still grimly rolling on in sullen flood ;
The world once more in outer darkness thrown,
Rejected by the God, who'd deem'd it good—
A plaything, cast aside in anger'd mood—
Because the human puppets, He had made,
The dictates of their natural selves obey'd.

And that strange communing, wherein the Lord
 Makes self-confession, that the puppet race
Had need of Cherubim, with flaming sword,
 Upon the eastern gates to take their place,
 To keep it from usurping god-like grace ;
Makes self-confession, that the puppet man,
In rising from the beast, had foil'd His plan.

Aye, every syllable received assent,
 None doubting a significance so clear,
Divested of all figurative intent,
 And meaning only what the ancient seer
 Had caus'd upon the surface to appear ;
No subtleties, obscure, conceal'd from sight,
But truth, eternal truth, in black and white.

Still saturated, 'neath tradition's bane,
 With poison'd superstitions of a day,
Not yet bygone, though little did remain
 Of that vast, mythological array,
 What wonder, that their fancy ran astray !
Since ignorance credulity must breed,
Eternal law, no matter what the creed.

And so the solemn centuries roll'd by,
Indifferent to the circumstance of man,
The ebb and flow of human destiny,
With mightiest of empires in the tan,
And Fate, with thumb downstretch'd to fullest span;
Indifferent to the silent change, that leas'd
The ornaments of Nero to a priest.

Oh ! Tiber, hast thou in thy wondrous womb,
Yet further prodigies of princely pride ?
Before thy last-born lies within the tomb,
Will yet another rise, and roughshod ride
Across the western races, far and wide ?
Twice hast thou to an empire given birth,
That ruled for centuries the cultured earth !

II.

The race sunk down in slavery, more deep,
Than thousand years afore, since now the souls,
Were with the bodies in a tyrant's keep,
Each century, a gruesome tale unrolls
Of triumph over sense by mystic stoles ;
Till blindfold Reason, clamouring to see,
Burst through the bonds, and set the conscience free.

In olden days, from Northern Sea did come
The shock, that hurl'd the mighty empire down,
That humbled in the dust Imperial Rome,
Reducing it to a provincial town,
And placed on a Barbarian's brow the crown ;
And, freak of fate, once more the self-same race
Now shook the purple structure to its base.

Oh ! glorious rise to freedom, grand dissent ;
Than thine, no deed hath ever been more fraught
With fateful consequence to man, who rent
Thereby the slavish cords in twain, and taught
The right of man to individual thought ;
The right the granary's contents to sift,
To use, and not misuse, God's precious gift !

From that great moment, Reason was applied—
Though not to full extent—to guide the mind,
With the result, that superstition died—
At least that gross, anthropomorphic kind,
Which worshipped relics of bygone mankind ;
Which asked for flesh as sacramental food,
And turn'd an earthly vintage into blood.

And so to purer gaze the written past
Was subjected, and Reason brought to bear
To make distinction 'midst that treasure vast,
'Twixt figurative intent, and meaning clear,
What struck as truth, or symbol on the ear ;
Refusing to accept, as gold, the ore,
Till analysed by experts to the core.

And thus, the old-world legend of the Fall
Came under scrutiny again, and fail'd
The crucial test ; for it might well appal
The anxious faculties of man, which rail'd
At pagan parables, to find assail'd
In so direct a way, in words so clear,
The justice of a God, to them so dear.

No longer literal truth to it ascribed,
As allegory was the tale receiv'd,
Where emblematically was described
The birth of pain and sin, which men believ'd
To be the outcome of a God, aggriev'd ;
A God, so anger'd with a fallen race,
That He withdrew from them protective grace.

For how to solve a mystery so deep,
The presence of predominating pain
Amongst a helpless race in God's own keep,
Who, though they strive, and ever strive again,
To ease them of their burden, ne'er attain ;
A God of pity, merciful and wise,
Who could, were He so will'd, the whole revise !

Or greater mystery still, how to explain
The presence—nay, ascendancy of sin,
Which stalks aggressively across the main
And, wheresoe'er it pleaseth, doth begin
To draw its myriad votaries within
The fell, magnetic charm of its embrace,
When God, were He so will'd, could sin efface !

God made the world, and saw that it was good,
But sin to His account could not be laid ;
From which mankind deduced in thoughtful mood,
That sin in aftertime an entrance made,
Resulting from a fallen angel's raid ;
And thus, that men relaps'd from higher state,
Omnipotence outflank'd by Satan's hate.

From higher state of perfect rectitude,
Wherein no sin, nor breath of sin had place,
Where man and woman walk'd together nude,
Unconscious of all shame, a sense so base,
Impossible to such a god-like race ;
A species, ignorant of all things foul,
In God's own image, and with God's own soul.

Aye ! such, in fact, did reverent men believe,
A race of God's own choosing, perfect man,
The thought of sin, unable to conceive,
Who, notwithstanding, foil'd the holy plan,
And thereby placed the species under ban,
To toil and die in pain, to live in hell,
Till Christ came down amidst the race to dwell.

Oh ! strange belief ! Oh ! curious twist of mind,
That brought a thinking race to such a strait,
'That they to consequence were wholly blind,
And could without compunction demonstrate,
The God of Love, to be a god of hate ;
A structure, monstrous to the sense erect,
And ne'er their primal premiss once suspect !

To us, the latest outcome of that force,
Which slowly causes all things to expand,
Evolving mind and matter in due course,
Unfathom'd oceans, changing into land,
With ape attesting philosophic brand,
To us, the latest product of the years,
Such attitude, incredible appears.

And yet, in spirit humble, not contempt,
We scrutinise the errors, gone before,
Analogy declining to exempt
Ourselves from equal error, even more,
Since we possess accumulated lore,
The wisdom gather'd, as the years advance,
The worth of which, past errors but enhance.

Aye, as we judge, so shall we, too, be judged,
By generations in the womb of time ;
A chary recognition may be grudged
Perhaps, by them, our efforts most sublime,
The trains of thought, we think have reach'd their
prime ;
For where all things evolve by slow degree,
Finality in thought can never be.

And yet, some unknown instinct goads us on,
To give the understanding fullest play,
To struggle after truths, and, victory won,
To step by step move forward on our way
And journey through the night, to meet the day ;
Despite the knowledge, that our highest flight,
Is but a rudimentary gleam of light.

Uprise, ye zealous workers, line on line,
Stupendous effort make the truth to gain,
Fulfil to utmost limit God's Design,
And have no fear, by falling midst the slain,
Lest you may sacrifice your lives in vain ;
For though the keep your onslaught will resist,
Some stone may be detach'd, if you persist !

III.

The human race ne'er fell from higher state ;
Mankind was ne'er created perfect man ;
The laws of evolution demonstrate,
To certainty, that the Almighty's Plan
Could ne'er have been to end, where it began ;
All things move onward, upward to a goal
Disclos'd alone to the Eternal Soul.

For though the race be now so far evolv'd,
To dare assay the Plan in searching fires,
Dissect, and analyse, and deem it solv'd
When God some further gleam of light inspires,
We still are nought but puppets, tied to wires.
We criticise, but still we surely wend
Our way, despite ourselves, to that great End.

'Tis Nature's law, that race should prey on race ;
From lowest form of vegetable life,
To highest form of man, in every place,
The same applies, a never-ending strife,
Existence e'en dependent on the knife ;
A law, undeviating as the course
Made by this planet-world around its Source.

For life, as we conceive it, could not be,
Save these conditions held imperious sway ;
With space confin'd, impossible to see,
How species could exist, except by prey,
Indeed, life could not live in other way ;
If plants drop seeds within a tiny place,
'Tis evident, that some must some efface.

And thus it comes, the fittest do survive,
The weaklings passing under out of sight,
Not strong enough to keep themselves alive,
Or not adapted to sustain the fight,
Where Fate had rear'd them, in the dawn of light ;
And so, as countless centuries roll by,
All things evolve from lower state to high.

'Tis tantamount, in fact, to process seen,
Where goods are sampled by successive test,
Each generation's handicraft to wean
All things not up to standard from the rest,
And so in course of time attain the best ;
For thus, unconsciously are we refined
By the directing force of God's own Mind.

Not uniform, perhaps, the slow advance ;
And even, to our own defective ken,
Which only takes an egotistic glance,
Embracing the review of modern men,
A retrogressive movement, now and then ;
But wearied waves, that down the fore-shore glide,
Do not affect the volume of the tide.

And this, then, being the eternal law,
Were e'en it possible, which it were not,
Since schemes, which are complete, admit no flaw,
Can man be disconnected from the lot
Of living things—a solitary blot
Upon the fairness of a perfect scheme,
Midst which, no rival near, he stands supreme?

Impossible conception to an age,
Where Reason paramount hath taught the need
Of measuring by scientific gauge,
And not by the requirements of a creed!
Impossible conclusion to concede,
That man, alone, the summit of the vane,
Must take his place on a degraded plane!

Avaunt the thought! Mankind has right to claim
An equal recognition of its worth;
No false appraisement, neither mend, nor maim,
But an exact presentment of its birth
From other things to highest state on earth;
Directed thence, by God's Almighty Power,
From what we know not—but we know 'twas lower.

E'en now, with evolution on the flood,
The race, call'd man, can still be found so low,
That nought of man exists, save flesh and blood ;
A human beast, with Patagonian brow,
Who reasons with the instincts of the sow ;
And yet, a period was, when humankind
Had for its crown of crowns a Dyak mind.

With this in view, 'tis not too great a stretch,
To contemplate a still remoter date,
Where one would find the semi-human wretch,
Not recognized by Dyak as a mate,
The highest growth again of human state ;
And so, continuing the process down,
The human race is merged in worlds unknown.

But now reverse the line of thought ; conceive
The species, destined to be man, so base,
That difficult distinction to perceive,
'Twixt them and those, whose bodies do encase
The germs, which will evolve to higher race,
Through countless centuries, and take the shape
Of present-day varieties of ape.

Conceive it thus, a species, wild and rude,
With Reason's crowning light not yet endow'd ;
Save hirsute covering, completely nude,
With form at times erect, at others bow'd
On all-fours searching after food, and loud
The screechings, as they scamper off afeard,—
“ Half-human,” we'd have said, had we but heard.

Conceive it thus, yet slowly moving on,
As season after season roll'd around ;
The father, traits transmitting to the son,
Expanding in the process, gaining ground,
Till ultimately new-born growths are found,
As firmly planted, as had been the germ,
In bygone days, before it ran its term.

Conceive it thus, progressing slow, but sure,
Evolving ever upwards, grade by grade,
From simple into complex, foul to pure,
While inarticulate expressions fade,
And human speech finds echo in the glade ;
An unknown sound, productive of dismay,
As heralding the dawn of human sway.

Conceive it thus, and trace its upward rise
From animal proclivity to man,
Not as we know him now, but as surmise
Presents him to our fancy, in the van
Of human progress, as it first began.
Conceive it thus, and think what must have been,
Of step by step, the greatest that was seen.

The step, that first produced bi-pedic gait,
Upraising abject race off hands and knees?
Or that, which made the tongue articulate,
In chosen terms of speech, did it so please?
Or that which clothed the flesh?—No, none of these!
The greatest rise, that ever man did span,
Was that, which man still calls, “The Fall of Man.”

A paradox is this, but true in fact;
No subtle jugglery of well-known words:
“The Fall of Man” was the stupendous act,
That rais’d him from the level of the herds,
The beasts of prey, the reptiles, and the birds;
Before sin came, propelling him along,
Like them was he, unconscious of all wrong.

Unconscious, mark you—only that, no more ;
Not *free* from wrong, as wrong to us is known,
But perpetrating daily crimes of gore,
Whose heinous nature, part and parcel grown
Of his degraded self, reveal'd his own ;
Nor moral, nor immoral, but a state,
Un-moral, we may aptly designate.

Unmoral—knowing nought of right or wrong,
Possess'd of neither virtue nor reverse,
A creature, taking class, where beasts belong,
Not under ban of most satanic curse,
But living just their natural selves—no worse ;
Incapable of sin, or moral flaws,
Incapable of good, from self-same cause.

And yet, though they as near resemblance bore
To those around, as human sight could find,
A glorious destiny, for them in store,
Lay quickening within the Cosmic Mind,
Incognisable to encaged mankind ;
A destiny, which even now men fail
To comprehend, through the obscuring veil.

Aye, glorious indeed, since it design'd,
To raise from foulest depth to purest tone
A crawling race, to deify with mind,
And there a spiritual sense enthrone,
Sublime vicegerent of the Great Unknown ;
Accredited with warrant to unroll
A world of wondrous sweep on wings of soul.

Yet how effect so radical a change !
How were it possible to bring to pass
An evolution of such boundless range,
Transcending e'en what turn'd a molten mass
To verdur'd mountains, and to vales of grass ;
How were it possible to frame the plan,
Without the consciousness of sin in man ?

Impossible conceit ! So God made sin,
Evolving human mind to such a height,
That new-born consciousness awoke within,
Begetting by degrees a new-born light,
The primal difference 'twixt wrong and right,
The power to discern ; the moral sense,
With its potentialities immense.

Aye, God made sin, as also God made good,
Correlatives, twin-born, at self-same birth ;
The self-same consciousness, misunderstood
For ages long by those who ruled the earth,
Gave rise to both, pronouncing on their worth ;
Dyadic growth, inseparably conjoined ;
The head and the reverse, together coined.

Aye, God made sin—no blasphemy is this ;
On Him, and Him alone, the burden lies,
That moral evil in existence is,
Amongst the race, so honour'd in His eyes,
That it dare e'en attempt to pierce the skies ;
To probe the mysteries, in Him involv'd,
And recognise no rest, till they be solv'd.

Aye, God made sin, in that He brought the race,
To consciousness supreme, whereby to see
That sin were possible, an occult grace
By means of which, the will, emerging free,
Proclaim'd mankind no mere machine to be,
Attached to crank and shaft by driving-band,
But thing of complex thought, with self-command ;

With self-command ; with power to discern
The right from wrong ; and power to control
The erring sense of flesh at every turn ;
Evolving by degrees the sense of soul,
And soaring upwards, as the ages roll ;
Aye, such were the accounts, that Sin could tell,
And, such was the descent, to which man fell.

Oh ! race, uprising out that unknown deep,
Oh ! thou of little courage, how so blind,
That thou dar'st not essay to take the leap,
The crumbling wall invites, where lies confin'd,
Enswathed in ignorance, the hallow'd mind !
No frowning battlements confront the eye ;
A rescue is assur'd to those, who try.

Cast off the cobwebs, that encase the brain,
The patriarchal principles instilled
By superstitious age, and feel no pain
In bidding them farewell, since it be will'd
That things should have no use, their use fulfilled ;
As lily, blossoming from out the mire
Discards the clinging soil, as it mounts higher.

Just as the woman from the burning town
Cast back regretful glances, and was slain ;
So must it be with thee, with eyes cast down
Upon the past, that ne'er can live again
In bygone form 'neath evolution's strain ;
Inanimate, as she, wilt thou become,
An useless thing of nought—a cypher sum.

Arise ! Strike out the road, that leads to truth,
Move onward, ever onward, through the night,
And unto all, who move, a wondrous ruth
Evince, no matter where or what the light,
That guides them forward, if it guides them right ;
And that must needs be right, which doth not sin
Against mankind without, or man within.

.
Look upward, and drink in the morning sun,
Each ray of glory from the cosmic sheaf ;
What matter it, the night, whose course is run,
Hath solaced thee, and given thee relief,
A new dawn breaketh, and a new belief ;
The past hath gone, its day for ever flown,
And worlds are rolling on to worlds unknown !

FRIENDSHIP.

OH ! once my well-loved friend,
When musing o'er sweet memories bygone,
Which must pervade at times the inward soul,
No matter what the mood predominant—
Dost thou recall that name, to thee so dear 5
In palmy days of blithesome bachelorhood,
Before thou, turning traitor, left our camp
Of celibates, and joined the shameless foe ;
There to remain, with no more sense of wrong,
Than hadst thou merely toss'd the ruby glass 10
To peerless woman, in postprandial fun ;
Foreknowing its reception at our hands,
And secretly enjoying ? More than this,
Doth not one struggling gleam, one conscience-prick,
Awake in thee remembrance of a bond, 15
We called—so innocent is youth, so sweet,
So full of trust, ingenuous, so blind
To the inevitable change, that time

Effects on all, so thoroughly convinced,
That as the present, so must be the past— 20
A Solemn Covenant—ye gods !—a phrase,
Designed on such account to rouse thy mirth
To loud, and e'en undignified guffaws !
A Solemn Covenant, forsooth—and yet,
Methinks, if I remember well, 'twas made 25
In all good faith on both sides, and am sure
'Twas made on one.

Ah ! we were young indeed,
Though I, 'tis true, had known the sense of life
One lustrum longer, which was tantamount,
So chick-like was our gaze, so short our view, 30
To deeming I possess'd full attribute
Of patriarchal sage ; when every thought
Proclaim'd aloud the melancholy truth
Though we, ourselves, were deaf to every sound,
That I, with budding reason, had e'en lost 35
The rudimental instincts of the child ;
That I resembled more some floating spar,
Than holdfast driven deep, as thou didst think,
Within the adamantine foreshore-rock
Of Knowledge. What a sweep of years hath pass'd, 40

Since utter'd, an eternity of time,
Enough to scatter broadcast to the winds
A score of Solemn Covenants, so call'd ;
Or speaking to a more exact degree,
Precise as logarithmic scientist, 45
Just four whole years, and five-and-twenty days,
No more, no less—stupendous Time-assault,
How wonder that it failed !

But with what scorn,
And finely cast derision of the soul,
The inmost soul, would we in those dead days 50
Have met the charge, had one been rash enough
To venture on prediction, to affirm
That as has happened now, must be the end.
How mocking would have rung the laugh, and great
The strength, engender'd by the secret sense 55
Of heart's affinity ; and with what aim,
Would we have hurled the contumelious lie
Back to the giver, caring aught for none
Save one another—just ourselves—the rest
Of humankind in limbo—which is proof 60
Decisive of our callous state of mind,
Despite our years.

So much has happen'd since,
I find myself in wonder, if 'twere not
A dream, a pleasant figment of the brain,
A sweet impression, such as oft remains ' 65
In waking moments, after peaceful sleep ;
When mind, refresh'd by undisturb'd repose,
Recalls the fleeting fancies of the night,
So clearly mark'd with incident minute,
And light and shade defin'd to such degree 70
Of absolute exactitude, that doubt
Steps in, and lingering on, expands,
Until its own identity is lost,
And merged in what is almost certainty,
That Fancy, playing traitor, had with skill 75
Usurp'd the throne of Fact. Around me now,
Without much spinal effort, I perceive
Presentments of thy face, in number three ;
The one in profile grave, the other two
In cricketing costume, with half-form'd smile, 80
Betok'ning ease and strength, as doth befit
A votary of sport. There have they stood,
For full four years or more, since that red date,
When we in all Solemnity clasp'd hands,

And swore eternal Covenant of trust, 85
Of love, and faith, and heart's fidelity ;
Eternal as the firmament, as sure
As Earth's elliptic course around the sun.
There have they stood, companions in my toil,
Partakers of my leisur'd ease, fast friends, 90
Whose presence hath beguiled me many a time,
When all the world grew dark ; whose sympathy
Hath never fail'd—no matter what the weight
Of care upon my brow—to flood the soul
With sunshine of content. There have they stood, 95
And there they must remain, whate'er I will,
Though their original significance
Be lost, though they be merely symbols dead
Of something gone before, though they have now
No deeper value, than some colour'd card ; 100
For habit is a master, whose decree
Inexorable gives the slave no choice ;
Whose autocratic word is paramount ;
Who binds the cords of custom in such wise,
That strength of will is powerless to strive 105
Against such complex knot. They must remain ;
As soon pluck out the heart, and think to live,

As cast away so integral a part
Of my well-being.

Never a day hath pass'd,
Without my gazing on those lineaments, 110
Unconsciously maybe—for there they stand—
As one, who rapt in purest ecstasy,
While gazing upward at the azure sky,
All fleck'd with skimming cloud, and fulgent haze,
Sees nothing save his own subjective thought, 115
Yet indirectly influenced by that,
His eye rejects. I wonder, if the same
Hath been my fate with thee, or if not e'en
A counterfeit presentment now survives
To tell you that I lived, to shew to thee, 120
That once I were thy friend.—How truly quaint,
To find myself in academic mood
Transcribing such a thought, with Covenant
Of great Solemnity not five years old !
How passing strange !

'Tis curious to note 125
This stealthy, subtle influence of Time
On our affections. As some tiny stream,
In course of ages, cleaves the solid rock,

And forms a yawning chasm, wide and deep,
'Twixt twin-begotten mountain peaks, allied 130
Since cosmic birth ; so works relentless Time
On human hearts. So gradual is the change,
So imperceptible, that on the mind
Of man, it makes no mark. Day follows day,
Presenting it to outward view the same, 135
Disintegration's silent course, too slow,
To fix the human eye. Not e'en the range
Of deepening shadow is perceiv'd, not e'en
The widening rift ; though swelling stream
Grows ever broad and strong, with cataracts 140
In miniature, and headlong pace. Thus on,
Till comes a day, when memory aroused,
Perchance objectively, maybe through force
Of psychic current, origin unknown,
The veil, obscuring truth, is torn aside ; 145
And in a trice, the fact, so long conceal'd,
Lies nakedly expos'd ; and then—surprise,
Long-drawn, incredulous, amaz'd surprise,
And oftentimes dismay !

So has it been, 149
My once loved friend, with me. For years I've dwelt,

In musing, meditative, tender mood
Upon our friendship ; caring nought for Time,
Nor its encroachments ; seeing nought of change,
Advancing steadily by steps and strides,
And leading to estrangement. Like to one, 155
Who looks with rapt attention at some thing,
So fixedly, that brain becomes benumbed,
And fails to note the thing removed, but sees
It still, materially the same, when, lo,
The thing no longer is—so hath my gaze 160
Upon our friendship been deceiv'd. To me,
It seemed the same, as it had ever been
Since first evolv'd—an actuality,
Assur'd by heart's conviction, and endors'd
By mind, without one single glance bestow'd 165
Upon the warranty, the drawer's name
Sufficient in itself, as guarantee :
When all along, the substance starved to death
By cold neglect, had slowly passed away
So utterly, that not e'en shell remain'd 170
To shew that it had been—a sepulchre,
Unblest, devoid of hatchment or of stone,
Unknown, unkempt, with tutelary imp

In charge—phantasmic figment of the brain,
In masquerading garb of what had died, 175
So like, so strangely like, that sense at fault
Was cozened by the sham, and deem'd it real.

My friend—so habit clings—with wider sense,
The product of experience and years,
'Tis no great feat to accurately dissect 180
The cause of our estrangement. Natural Law
Must have its way, in spite of human Will.
The Laws remain eternal, and to hope
For deviation from their natural course
Is folly. Miracles have disappear'd, 185
Since Science took the field, and step by step,
Advanced in irresistible array
Along the winding, uphill path, that leads
To Knowledge. And 'tis one of Nature's laws,
That human Love can no more think to live 190
On air, than human body. In each case,
The thing must die, unless sustain'd by food.
The heart, though more enduring than the flesh
Maybe, cannot survive the cold neglect
Of Time ; and when the treatment, meted out, 195

Is tantamount—'tis truth, I merely state—
To absolute starvation, not one crumb
Of nutriment receiv'd from either side
For years, annihilation, slow but sure,
Must certainly set in. So has it been 200
With us, and if regret expends itself,
Now all is gone, lamenting that a state
So pitiable should be the one result
Of Covenant, conceiv'd in circumstance
Of such unparalleled Solemnity, 205
There still remains to philosophic mind
A source, whence comfort may be found—a source,
Sufficient surely to console—the thought—
The blessèd thought—we have ourselves to blame,
Ourselves alone ! 210

THE END.

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